

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4 and 6 are pending in this application. By the Office Action, claims 1, 2 and 9 are rejected and claims 3-7 are objected to. By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended and claims 3, 5 and 7-9 are canceled. Claim 1 is amended to include all of the limitations of non-rejected claim 3. Thus, no new matter is added. In view of the amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication that claims 3-7 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowed if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The Office Action rejects claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,166,101 to Takami et al.; rejects claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over JP11-152441 to Takami et al.; and rejects claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,721,020 to Takami et al.

Claim 9 is canceled and claim 1 is amended to include the limitations on non-rejected claim 3, thus rendering these rejections moot. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1, 2, 4 and 6 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

H. James Voeller
Registration No. 48,015

JAO:HJV/amw

Date: December 19, 2003

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

DEPOSIT ACCOUNT USE
AUTHORIZATION
Please grant any extension
necessary for entry;
Charge any fee due to our
Deposit Account No. 15-0461